

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EAGR, PN

SUBJECT: SHAKEUP IN AGRICULTURE MINISTRY STAFF

SAN JOSE FOR AGATT

BEGIN LOU: SUMMARY: AGRICULTURE MINISTER PAREDES HAS ANNOUNCED FAIRLY EXTENSIVE SHAKEUP IN MIDA, EXECUTING SOME PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR REORGANIZATION. THERE ARE TENTATIVE INDICATIONS THAT FURTHER CHANGES MAY BE FORTHCOMING IN MARKETING AREA. WHILE NEW ORGANIZATION WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO SETTLE, OUR PRELIMINARY IMPRESSION IS THAT CHANGES HAVE BEEN FAVORABLE, WITH SOME DEAD WOOD ELIMINATED AND POSSIBILITY OF GREATER COORDINATION IN MIDA OPERATIONS. END SUMMARY, END LOU.

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: LOCAL PRESS AND BROADCAST MEDIA HAVE ANNOUNCED FAIRLY EXTENSIVE CHANGES IN STAFFING, AND SOME ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION, WITHIN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (MIDA). CHANGES WERE ANNOUNCED IN TWO PARTS, FIRST GROUP ON SEPTEMBER 4 AND SECOND AND MORE SIGNIFICANT ON SEPTEMBER 10, AND CARRIED IN PAPERS
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FOR FOLLOWING DAYS.

2. CARRYING THROUGH ON PREVIOUSLY-ANNOUNCED INTENT TO MAKE CERTAIN STRUCTURAL REORGANIZATIONS (REFTEL), PRODUCTION HAS BEEN SPLIT INTO THREE SEPARATE DIRECTORATES FOR AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND DAIRIES WITH A COORDINATOR OF PRODUCTION APPOINTED. MIDA REGION FORMERLY INCLUDING BOTH HERRERA AND LOS SANTOS PROVINCES HAS BEEN DIVIDED IN TWO AND A DIRECTOR APPOINTED FOR EACH.

3. IN PERSONALITIES, MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE IS ANNOUNCEMENT ON SEPTEMBER 10 THAT VICE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE GUSTAVO GONZALEZ WILL PERSONALLY ASSUME POSITION AS DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, REPLACING MAJ. ANGEL MINA, WHO MOVES TO DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION FOR MINISTRY. COMPLETE LIST OF INDIVIDUALS WHOSE APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED POUCHED ARA/PAN AND SAN JOE FOR AGATT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN LOU: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS, HOWEVER, THAT GUSTAVO GONZALEZ APPOINTMENT AS DIRECTOR OF MARKETING MAY NOT BE PERMANENT; WHILE NO STATEMENT ONE WAY OR THE OTHER WAS MADE IN PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT, GONZALEZ REPORTEDLY TOLD STAFF IN MARKETING THAT HE WAS TO TAKE OVER POSITION ONLY FOR 30 DAYS, WITH PRIMARY PURPOSE OF PREPARING REPORT TO MINISTER DEALING WITH SUGGESTION THAT MARKETING BE CONVERTED FROM PART OF MIDA PROPER INTO INDEPENDENT AGENCY. ONE SOURCE WITHIN MIDA HAS ADVISED US THAT HE IS CERTAIN GUSTAVO GONZALEZ WILL NOT BE REMAINING AS VICE MINISTER, BUT RATHER WILL BE REPLACED BY SOMEONE ELSE CHOSEN BY AND CLOSE TO PAREDES. GONZALEZ' INITIAL REACTION, UPON ANNOUNCEMENT OF PAREDES' APPOINTMENT, WAS APPREHENSION THAT HE WOULD BE REPLACED. FROM SITUATION AS IT NOW EXISTS, OUR INFERRANCE IS THAT DURING THIS INTERIM APPOINTMENT, GONZALEZ WILL BE DESIGNING HIMSELF A NEW JOB AS HEAD OF INDEPENDENT MARKETING AGENCY.

5. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT CHANGES IN STAFFING CAME AS A SURPRISE EVEN TO SOME MEMBERS OF MIDA STAFF, WHOSE FIRST INFORMATION ABOUT THEM WAS PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON TV. WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING TO INDICATE WHO MIGHT SUCCEED GUSTAVO GONZALEZ AS VICE MINISTER IN EVENT THINGS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COME TO PASS AS PROGNOSTICATED ABOVE. SAME MIDA SOURCE, HOWEVER, INDICATED TO US THAT MINA'S NEW APPOINTMENT AS DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A DEMOTION. PAREDES HAS CONTINUED TO BE ALMOST COMPULSIVELY PERAPETITIC SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT; ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO GUESSES AS TO ROLE WHICH MIGHT BE PLAYED BY A NEW VICE MINISTER, IF AND WHEN, OUR SOURCE INDICATED THAT MINA IN HIS NEW CAPACITY WOULD BE GENERAL FACTOTUM FOR PAREDES

IN RUNNING MIDA HEADQUARTERS IN VERAGUAS WHILE LATTER
CONTINUES MOST OF THE TIME ON THE ROAD.

6. COMMENT: AS YET IT IS PREMATURE TO ASSESS FULL
IMPACT OF CHANGES, AND OF POTENTIAL FUTURE CHANGES, ON
MIDA OPERATIONS, BUT OUR PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT IS THAT
THEY ARE, ON THE WHOLE, FAVORABLE. GUSTAVO GONZALEZ IN
PARTICULAR HAS REPUTATION FOR BEING BOTH EFFICIENT AND
HONEST, AND HE POSSESSES KNOWLEDGE OF MARKETING FIELD
WHICH MINA ADMITTED THAT HE LACKED. OF THOSE OTHERS
SUPERSEDED BY NEWLY-ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENTS KNOWN TO
USAID/PANAMA, MOST APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY
INEFFECTIVE TO BEGIN WITH. WE HAVE HOPES THAT CHANGES
WILL NOT ONLY CONTINUE STRESS PAREDES HAS LAID UPON
INCREASING PRODUCTION SINCE HE BECAME MINISTER, BUT WILL
OFFER PROSPECTS FOR BETTER COORDINATION AMONG SECTORS
OF MIDA PROGRAM WHICH HAVE BENEFITTED FROM USAID LOANS,
PARTICULARLY RECENTLY-SIGNED MARKETING LOAN. END
COMMENT. END LOU.

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